

Meet Martin Dana

Eight years ago, Martin Dana took his first class to become a Certified Lead Technician. Today, he is the Assistant Director of the Environmental Department at Indian Township and works every day to fight a serious danger in his community—lead.

Lead can be found in many places, like house paint, soil, fish, and drinking water. Exposure to lead can make people and animals really sick. That's why people at Indian Township count on Mr. Dana to “get the lead out”—out of their houses, their soil and even their local wildlife, like the loon.

Mr. Dana educates his community in many ways about the dangers of lead. He works with the Environmental Protection Agency, other tribal governments and the State of Maine to develop and distribute informational brochures, videos, DVDs and booklets to children and parents. He inspects homes for high lead levels, and then works to make any high-level houses lead-free.

One of his favorite annual events is the special Ice Fishing Derby where Mr. Dana gives away lead-free sinkers to kids. Scientists discovered that loons mistake the older, lead sinkers for pebbles that loons then swallow to help with digestion. When loons swallow lead sinkers, instead of pebbles, the lead poisons them. Today, thanks to fun, educational events like the Ice Fishing Derby, most kids use lead-free sinkers and most stores don't even sell the older lead sinkers.



Mr. Dana also makes his community more beautiful in another way: he paints murals. A self-taught artist whose first painting was a paint-by-number of horses, Mr. Dana has since painted colorful scenes on the walls of the Indian Township School, in St. Ann's Church and in the Tribal Office. His favorite subjects include turtles, bears, traditional Passamaquoddy designs and traditional dances performed by the Passamaquoddy people.

Kids really enjoy his artwork and often ask him to teach them so they can draw and paint as well as he can. He always tells them: "I'll teach you, but it takes practice. You may not succeed at first, but if you keep practicing, you'll make something beautiful." And Martin Dana should know.